NUMBER 1

DALGODA™

BY JAN STRNAD AND DENNIS FUJITAKE

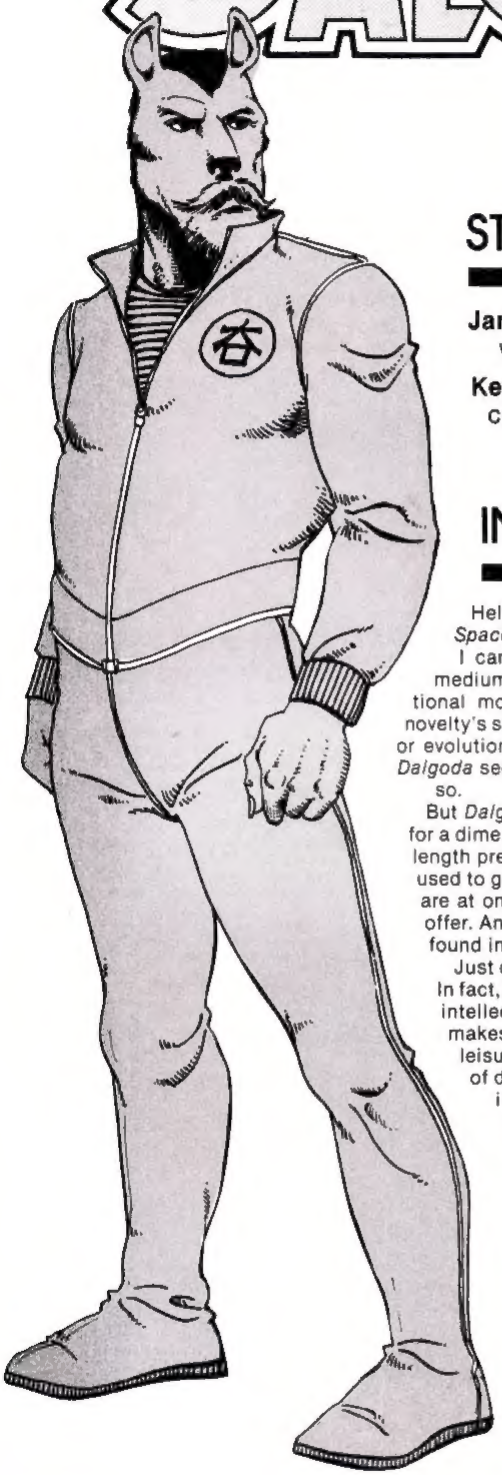
$2.25 ($2.75 CANADA)

PREMIERE ISSUE!

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

DALGODA™

"Factions"



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Gary Groth editor

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Kim Thompson ____ associate editor
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INTRODUCTION by Jan Strnad

Hello, and welcome to the first issue of *Dalgoda* (unofficial subtitle, *Dogs In Space*).

I can't claim that *Dalgoda* is a radical innovation within the graphic story medium. This is primarily the fault of the writer (me), a person steeped in the traditional modes of storytelling, who values clarity of expression over novelty for novelty's sake. Thank heavens not everyone in the comic book field is as stuffy as I am or evolution of the medium would skid to a grinding halt, but there you have it. If *Dalgoda* seems almost old-fashioned in its simplicity, I can only hope it's engagingly so.

But *Dalgoda* is not entirely a throwback to the days when comics came all in color for a dime. For one thing, it costs a lot more — two bucks and a quarter for this extra-length premiere issue and a buck and a half thereafter. The paper is better than you used to get for a dime, and the coloring process is capable of reproducing hues that are at once subtler and more vibrant than anything the comics of the past had to offer. And I have to say it — there's a different sensibility behind *Dalgoda* than you found in comic books back then, or commonly encounter today.

Just don't ask me what it is, because I don't have it pinned down myself just yet. In fact, I'm not too eager to figure it out — I like *Dalgoda* as it is, and when you try to intellectualize and articulate these things, you risk losing the gypsy magic that makes them work. I do know it has something to do with pacing — which is more leisurely than most comics — and a deeply held belief that there are more kinds of drama than one guy punching another in the face. It has to do with eschewing macho posturing, and with creating a hero you'd honestly like to meet — rather than a homicidal vigilante you would, in reality, cross the street to avoid. It has to do with a sense of humor, daring to be corny, and a love of dogs. More than that, I can't say.

We have an extra-length issue this first time out for several reasons, none of which is of any interest. Next issue *Dalgoda* goes to 32 pages, with 22 of them devoted to our canine hero and nine to a back-up feature titled "Grimwood's Daughter." (The other page will be an ad or a letters page or an editorial or some-dumb-thing.) More information on "Grimwood's Daughter" appears elsewhere in this issue, so just let me say that I'm staggered by the beauty of the job artist *Kevin Nowlan* is doing on my script, and I look forward to the published, full-color version of this elf-tale with eager anticipation.

I've saved this paragraph to sing the praises of Dalgoda's co-creator, artist *Dennis Fujitake.* Beyond the clean lines and layouts that make his work easy to follow and technically impressive, Dennis imbues his characters . . . *all* of them, right down to the guy shlepping boxes in the background . . . with a warmth and humanity rarely seen in mainstream material. No "generic people" on Dennis's pages; they're all individual, all real, all have a story to tell if someone would just bother to ask.

Then there's *Ken Smith*, philosopher, artist, publisher, and in this case, colorist extraordinaire. To say we are privileged to have Ken working with us on *Dalgoda* would be an understatement, but it's the best I can do without being sycophantic.

And of course there's our editor, *Gary Groth*. Of course.

Next issue hits the stands in two months. See you then!

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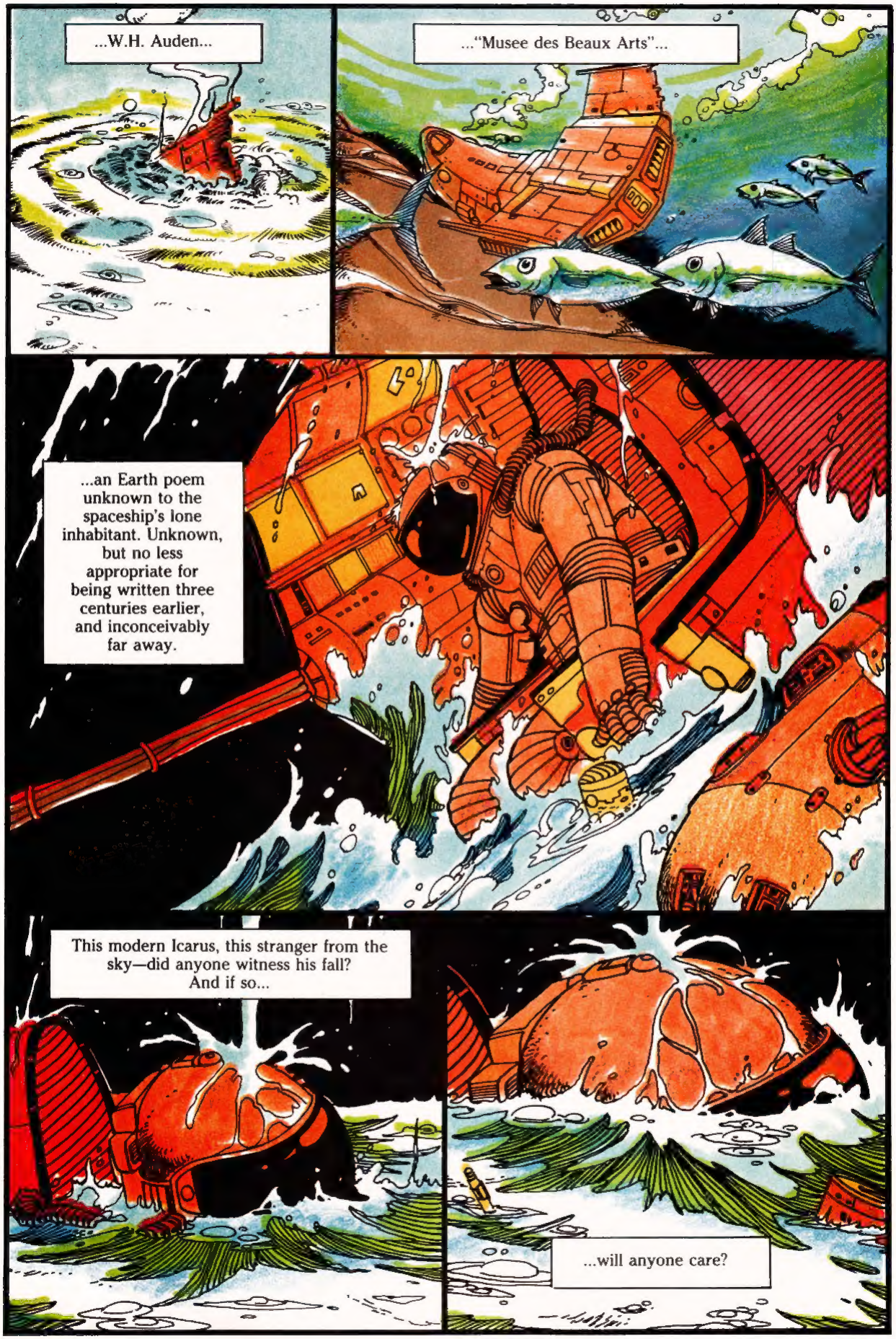
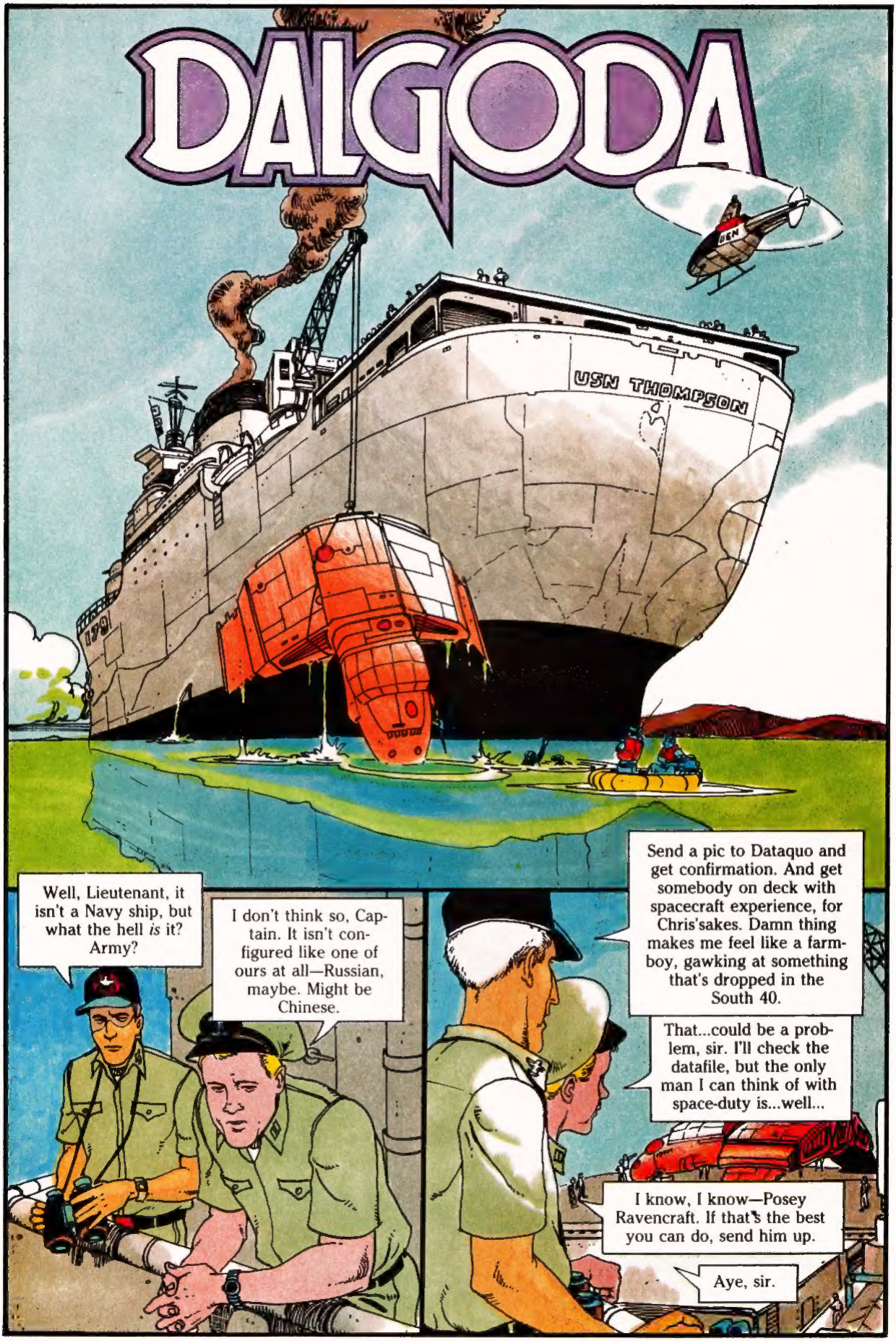
"About suffering they were never wrong, the Old Masters: how well they understood its human position..."
"...how it takes place while someone else is eating..."
"...or opening a window..."
"...or just walking dully along."


...W.H. Auden...
..."Musee des Beaux Arts"...
...an Earth poem unknown to the spaceship's lone inhabitant. Unknown, but no less appropriate for being written three centuries earlier, and inconceivably far away.
This modern Icarus, this stranger from the sky—did anyone witness his fall? And if so...
...will anyone care?


DALGODA
USN THOMPSON
Well, Lieutenant, it isn't a Navy ship, but what the hell *is* it? Army?
I don't think so, Captain. It isn't configured like one of ours at all—Russian, maybe. Might be Chinese.
Send a pic to Dataquo and get confirmation. And get somebody on deck with spacecraft experience, for Chris'sakes. Damn thing makes me feel like a farmboy, gawking at something that's dropped in the South 40.
That...could be a problem, sir. I'll check the datafile, but the only man I can think of with space-duty is...well...
I know, I know—Posey Ravencraft. If that's the best you can do, send him up.
Aye, sir.

Captain, sir! We've found the ship's hatch! It...it opened from *inside*!

Medical crew, on the double! Whoever he is, the poor bastard's *alive*! Let's get him out of there!

Is that wise, sir? I mean, shouldn't an armed guard...?

There's no need. After a flight like that, he knows he's lucky to be alive. He's got nothing to gain by causing trouble.

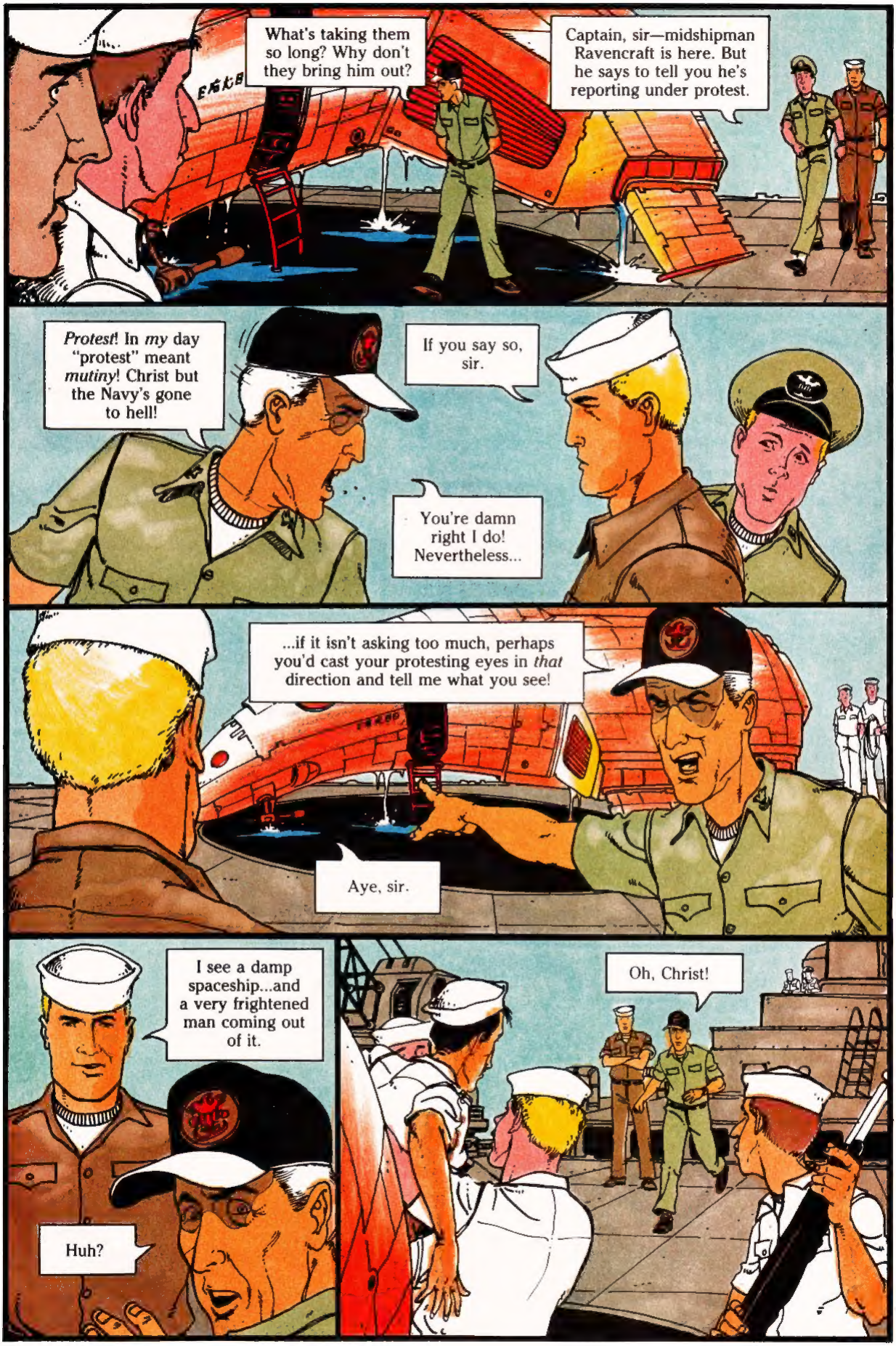
See anything?

Lots of hardware. Some of it's still shorting out. Let's go on in, but careful what you touch.

Hello? Where are you? Can you hear me?

Ulp...

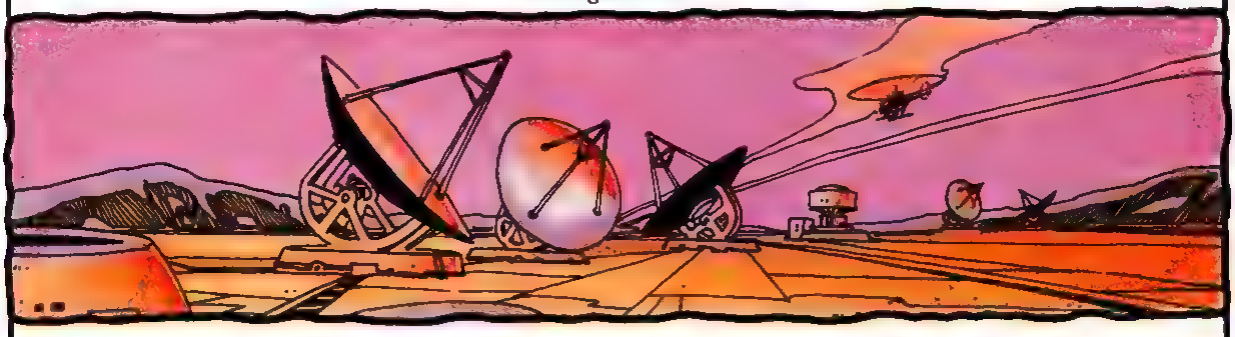
Don't move.
Where's Kneedam? Where are the papers? Is Kneedam out there?
What the hell's he talking about?
Beats me, but if this "Kneedam" character isn't outside, we're in big trouble.
Uhm, look pal...
I don't know anything about this. I'm just a medic, understand?
So why don't you let us go, and we'll send in somebody who knows what's going on—OK? What d'ya say?
You stay. The other one—give Kneedam this message...


What's taking them so long? Why don't they bring him out?
Captain, sir—midshipman Ravencraft is here. But he says to tell you he's reporting under protest.
Protest! In *my* day "protest" meant *mutiny*! Christ but the Navy's gone to hell!
If you say so, sir.
You're damn right I do! Nevertheless...
...if it isn't asking too much, perhaps you'd cast your protesting eyes in *that* direction and tell me what you see!
Aye, sir.
I see a damp spaceship...and a very frightened man coming out of it.
Huh?
Oh, Christ!

Jesus, man, what happened in there? Where's...?
Those eyes...they burn right through you! And that voice...!
It...it isn't human! I've never *seen* the like! I mean, on TV, but... but not...
A Canidan—it must be! Pull yourself together. What did he say? What does he want?
It...he... gave me a message... for...for Kneedam.
Kneedam? Who's Kneedam? What message?
That was good. I feel much better now.
He said he wasn't coming out until he sees his lawyer.
What?!

So *this* is what it comes to! *This* is the state of civilization! An alien crashlands in American waters and the first thing he wants is to *sue* somebody!
The world is going to hell in a hand-basket! I believe it! I honestly believe it!
Lieutenant, I want a *gas gun* and operator on deck immediately! I'm not putting up with this crap!
Aye, sir.
Excuse me, sir, but I don't think I'd do that. This is a very delicate situation. There aren't more than a dozen Canidans on the entire planet, and they're automatically granted diplomatic status.
Come off it, Posey! The damn thing's an *alien* and it's got a gun pointed at Brod's head! Who knows *what* it might do?
This is exactly the kind of hysterical thinking that nearly *destroyed* our relations with Canida the *first* time they visited us! You've had a history class, haven't you—or did you *skip* that chapter?
Think back. You've heard this before. It was the summer of 2042...

"Project Cyclops, abandoned for half a century, was reopened under a sympathetic administration. Updated with new technology, the giant radio telescopes were put back to work, searching the stars for signs of life."



"This time they found it—a radio transmission from a planet we couldn't even see. It was a weak signal, inscrutable at the time, but almost certainly *artificial.*"

Computer analysis of the signal revealed a bonus—it was transmitted on a *subspace carrier.* A normal radio transmission would have taken 36 years to span the distance between the two planets. The subspace signal made the trip in seconds.

Communication problems were eventually overcome and technological information was exchanged. The space programs of both planets leaped ahead by decades.

Twenty years after that first contact, both planets were building spaceships capable of interstellar travel at close to the speed of light. Two ships were launched...

...each bound for the other's planet. The result—thanks to fear and prejudice like yours —was disastrous.

Wait

"Our ship was traced uneventfully for 36 years..."

"...until 0800 hours, one week before its scheduled arrival at Canida..."

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP

"...when all communication ended abruptly."

"The Canidan ship landed on Earth seven days later amid suspicion and open hostility."

BEEP BEEP...IIINNEEEEEEEEE

"The people assumed the worst—that for some reason the Canidans had shot down our ship. At that time..."

"...things were tense all over the globe. Planetary war was brewing. And now it seemed that even the *aliens* were against us."

"The Vice President's speech was short and to the point."
Welcome to Earth. and...I'm sorry.
MP
I don't understand why you're doing this. Surely you're not afraid...?
The people need reassurance, so we're showing them what they want to see—our complete and unrelenting control of the situation. Please...bear with us.
MP
Do you suppose you could manage a smile for the cameras?
It's not something my people do, as a rule. But... I can try.
How's this?

Nasty looking thing, ain't it?
Turn it *off*, Charles! It's scaring the children!
"The Canidans protested the incarceration of their emissary. They denied all knowledge of our vanished ship, but said they were investigating unidentified objects in that sector of space."
"No one believed them, of course. It didn't make any sense for them to shoot down our ship, but who knew how an alien's mind worked, really?"
"Who knew what he was thinking, up there in his well-upholstered prison? He might be communicating with his homeworld this very minute, sending back secret reports by mental telepathy. *Who knew?*"
"God, how they hated him! They hated the way he stood there imperiously at the window, looking down on them. He seemed imperturbable, unmoved by their shouting and gesturing and stupid little placards. Why did the government tolerate this insult? The people called for justice. They wanted revenge."

"It wasn't a modern weapon that killed him, but an old-fashioned bullet from an antique gun, an old Army pistol that had never even left the States. The assassin had never fired it before. They called the shot 'lucky'."
The Canidans were outraged. Diplomatic relations were suspended while both sides studied the situation. Twenty-eight days later, the Canidans transmitted a special report.
"Two Canidan scoutships had been destroyed in an encounter with an unidentified spacecraft. The weaponry employed by the alien craft was unknown to them."
"The Canidans responded with long-range photon missiles. Most of them were shot down..."
"...but at least one found its target. Other such spacecraft were sought out, discovered, and consequently destroyed."

"One of them, disabled but intact, was taken back to Canida for examination."
"Careful scrutiny of the object convinced both sides that it was beyond the technology of either planet. A third spacefaring civilization was in evidence...obviously a hostile one. Diplomatic relations were restored."
In the last hundred years, eight ships have made the journey between Canida and Earth—five of them ours, and three from Canida. Subspace communication with the Canidans, of course, is routine
So why's *this* one sitting on a burr, huh? If we're so damn friendly with them, why doesn't he just come out and say *hello*?
That's a very good point—one the Captain and I should discuss...in private.
What? Oh... Yes, of course.
All right, Ravencraft—what's the bad news?
Just an observation, sir. It's over thirty-six light years to Canida. Even travelling at near-light speed, this ship must have left Canida more than thirty-six years ago, planetary time.
Okay. So?
So. .spaceship design changes with every technological advance. And the design of this one doesn't fit that time period at all. Looking at some of the details, well...

...it sounds impossible, but this ship *couldn't* have been manufactured more than a year ago.

Jesus Christ...

Then either the Canidans have developed faster-than-light-travel, or somehow—Lord knows how—they've managed to send material objects through subspace!

Either way, our esteemed canine allies have been holding out on us!

Which explains why he refuses to leave his ship! He's afraid we'll seize it and he'll never get it back!

Apparently he knows his Earth history better than some of your crew. No wonder he wants a lawyer.

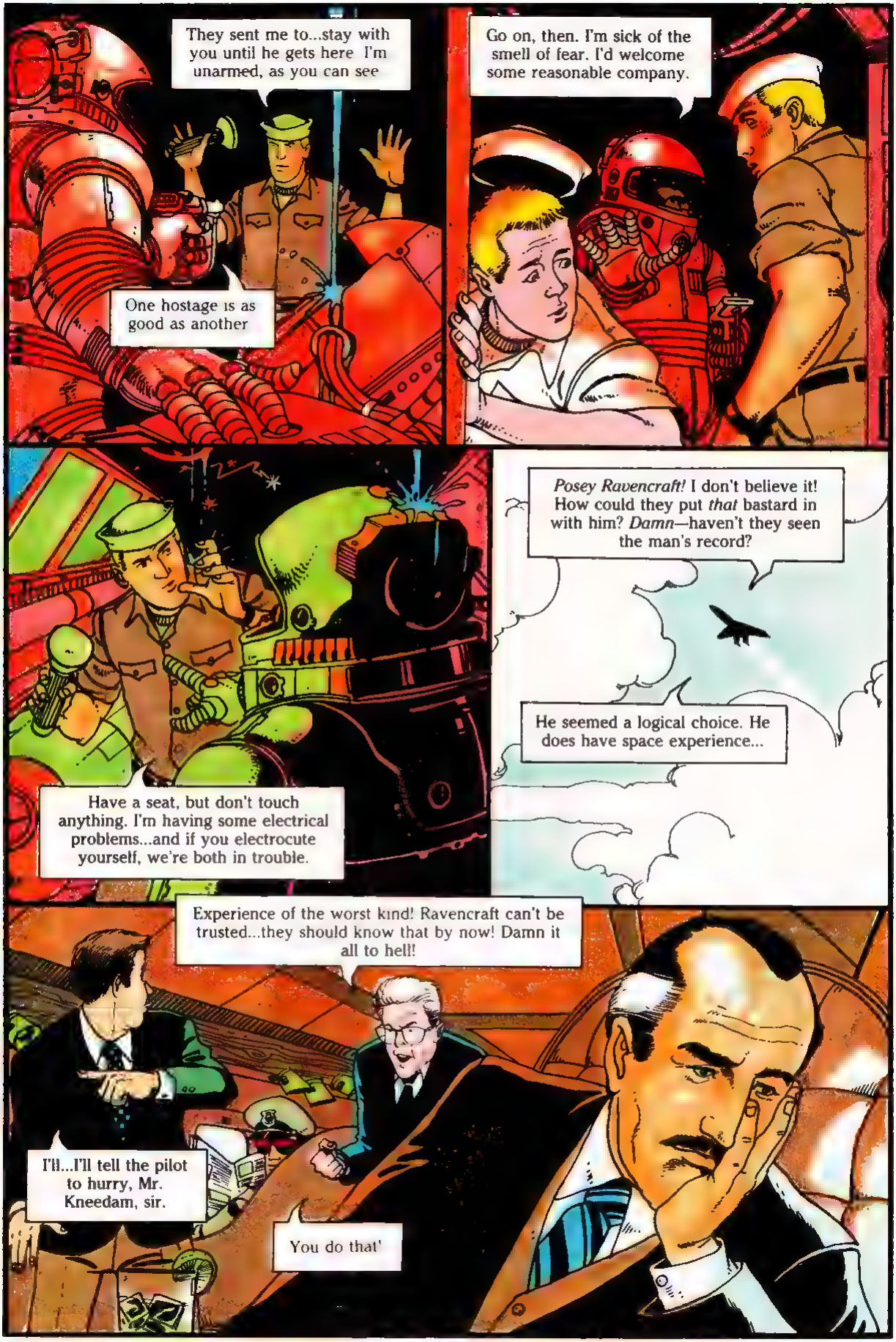
Captain! A message from Washington!

About time.

They've identified the ship. It was a top secret deal, supposed to come down in the Atlantic. Kneedam—whoever the hell *he* is—is on his way...with the alien's attorney. We're to take no action until he gets here.

Ravencraft, come here. I have a job for you.

Broderick in there is probably wetting all over himself in panic. Before he does something stupid, I want you to take his place.
Oh, no! You're not getting *me* in there! I leave the heroics to the younger generation!
Oh, is that right? Well, if patrol duty is too *hazardous* for you. .
...I could surely find you a position on some nice, quiet garbage scow...or maybe a supply boat hauling fertilizer from the Falkland Islands...
That won't be necessary, sir. I think I have a broader perspective now.
Good. And remember, if he wags his tail, it means he likes you.
Thank you, sir.
Well, *they* bought the scared routine. But did *he*?
Hold it Who are you? Where's Kneedam?
He's coming. You landed in the wrong ocean, but they radioed a message. Kneedam's on his way


They sent me to...stay with you until he gets here I'm unarmed, as you can see
One hostage is as good as another
Go on, then. I'm sick of the smell of fear. I'd welcome some reasonable company.
Have a seat, but don't touch anything. I'm having some electrical problems...and if you electrocute yourself, we're both in trouble.
Posey Ravencraft! I don't believe it! How could they put *that* bastard in with him? *Damn*—haven't they seen the man's record?
He seemed a logical choice. He does have space experience...
Experience of the worst kind! Ravencraft can't be trusted...they should know that by now! Damn it all to hell!
I'll...I'll tell the pilot to hurry, Mr. Kneedam, sir.
You do that'

Can you believe that? Posey Ravencraft...in with the alien right now! There's no telling *what* line of bull he's feeding the thing!

Uh-huh.

Fat lot *you* care! You lawyers are all the same...a client's a client, right? Traitors, baby-killers, *aliens*—what does it matter as long as the check doesn't bounce, eh?

I do my job. I was retained to represent the Canidan, and that is what I'll do.

And you'll hand him the World Security Council on a silver platter if you can, won't you, Trione? Who cares if the *world* loses as long as you and your client win!

If you wanted a lousy attorney, Mr. Kneedam, you should have *hired* a lousy attorney.

The clouds are beautiful, aren't they? So round and soft, like nude goddesses sporting in the sky...

Why *shouldn't* I trust Kneedam?
Because the World Security Council will take whatever it wants, no matter what kind of papers they've signed. One way or the other, they'll get it. If they want this ship...
What makes you think they're interested in my ship?
Why are you guarding it so jealously?
(Yawn) Excuse me..."Posey," wasn't it? It's been a long trip. If I could only lie down for an hour or so...
Go ahead, if you want. I'll wake you when Kneedam shows up.
You know, you smell OK, Posey, and that's good. I'm tempted to trust you. But still...
...you make my brain buzz. There's something about you that doesn't quite ring true. It isn't *my* welfare you're guarding, or your government's. Then whose? Your own?
(Yawn) Blast you, Dalgoda. Now you've got *me* doing it.

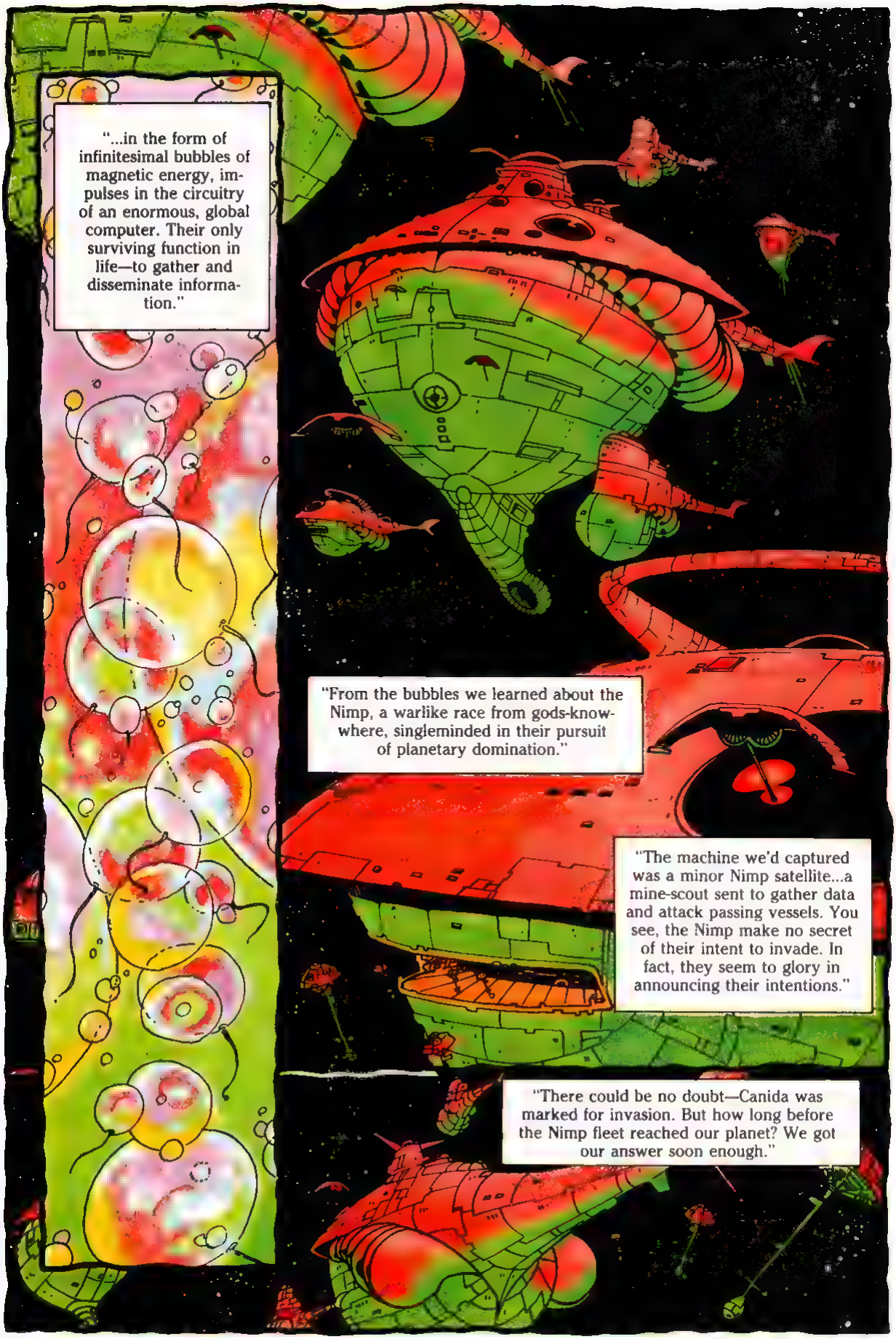
Look, Dal—the situation is obvious. Somehow this dripping hunk of debris made a thirty-six light year journey in less than a year...don't try to deny it. I can point to a hundred design details that prove what I'm saying.
And that makes this heap worth more than any fortune in the galaxy. Am I right?
There's no money in this deal, Posey
I'm not after money.
What I'm saying is, the World Security Council will have this ship. They'll kill you for it if necessary, contract or no contract.
It won't do them any good if I'm dead.
Why not?
Because I'm the only one...oh, thank you
You're welcome.
I'm the only one who understands the energy requirements...
Those can be computed.
...the only one familiar with the controls...
They can be figured out.
...and the only one who knows how to navigate through subspace.
Oh
And now you...that is, your people...feel the time has come to share this secret with the Earth.
Not at all. We'd have kept it to ourselves for another century if we could. Unfortunately, the Nimp have forced our hand.
The who?

By all that smells, they really *have* kept you in the dark, haven't they? Well, that can't last much longer. Let me finish the story you began earlier...

"The discovery of hostile spacecraft so close to our planet worried us. The search for alien life escalated a hundred-fold, conducted aboard giant space stations built specifically for that purpose."

"By our standards the planet was devoid of intelligent life, the civilization collapsed. But somehow the entire population lived on..."

"Contact was made. The planet lay in the opposite direction from Earth, was nearly a hundred light years away. The nature of the communication startled us, to say the least."


"...in the form of infinitesimal bubbles of magnetic energy, impulses in the circuitry of an enormous, global computer. Their only surviving function in life—to gather and disseminate information."
"From the bubbles we learned about the Nimp, a warlike race from gods-know-where, singleminded in their pursuit of planetary domination."
"The machine we'd captured was a minor Nimp satellite...a mine-scout sent to gather data and attack passing vessels. You see, the Nimp make no secret of their intent to invade. In fact, they seem to glory in announcing their intentions."
"There could be no doubt—Canida was marked for invasion. But how long before the Nimp fleet reached our planet? We got our answer soon enough."

Our communication with the "bubbles" ended abruptly, shortly after they began sending us data. About a year later our scanners picked up a small formation of unknown spacecraft half a light year out. We sent our ships to make contact ...it was the Nimp.

They attacked, and we returned fire.

We won that battle, mainly by force of numbers. It was obviously a very small part of the Nimp armada...it had probably been in our vicinity for several decades scouting, relaying information back to the main fleet.

What happened to the "bubbles"?

We never heard from them again. That's all I know.

Are the Nimp capable of sub-space travel?

No, I think not.

Assuming, then, that the Nimp armada was at least as far away as the "bubbles"—a hundred light years—then Canida is safe until... when was that first skirmish?

A hundred years ago. To be brief, our Canidan space forces fell to the Nimp this morning. The invaders will reach my planet in six months' time.

Fine time to tell us this. Why did you wait so long? We could have been preparing...

We've informed your government every step of the way, Posey. They are the secret-keepers, not us.

Until it comes to sub-space travel.

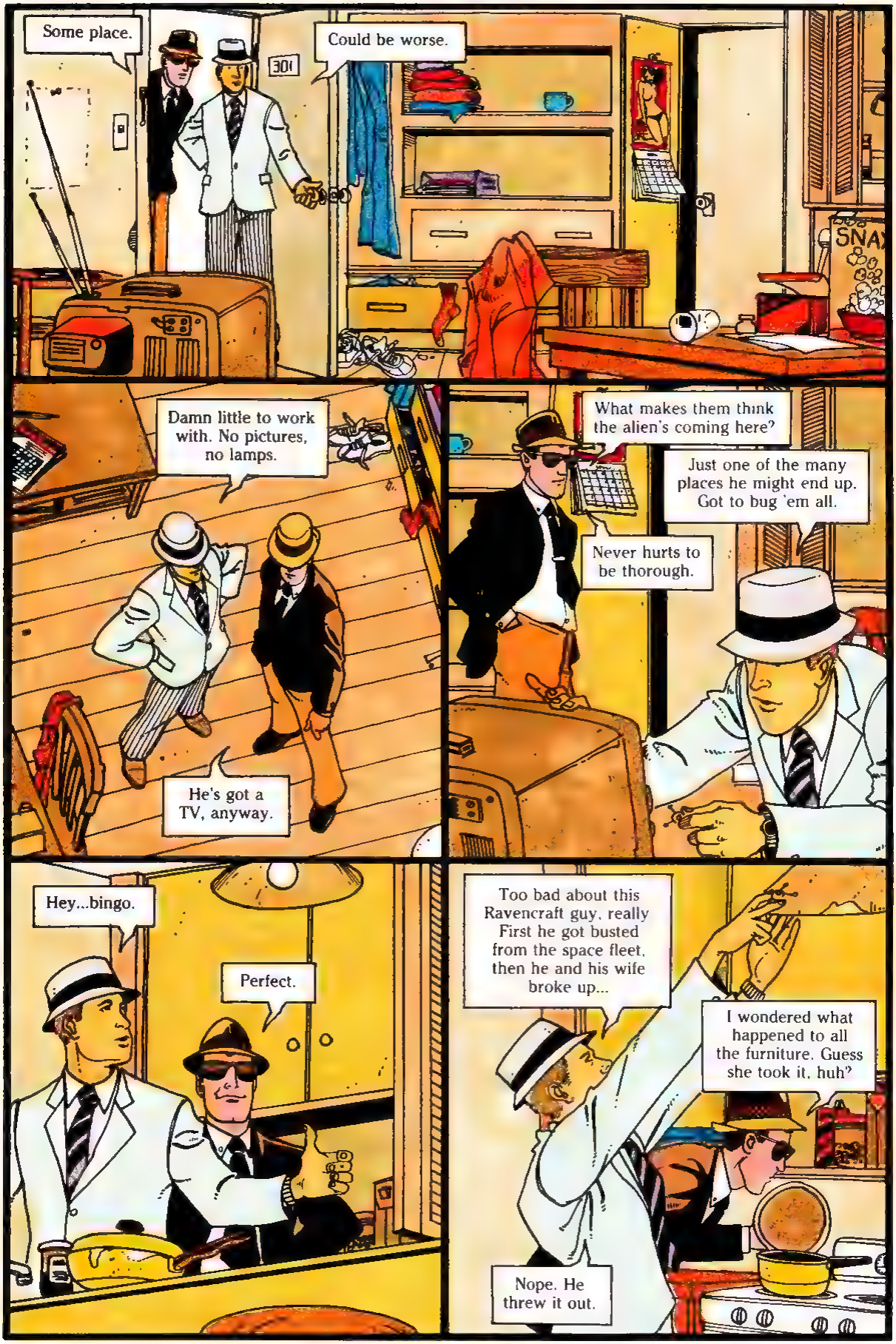
We aren't fools. You *shot* our *first* emissary, which told us a great deal about the human mentality. We felt we should maintain a military edge.

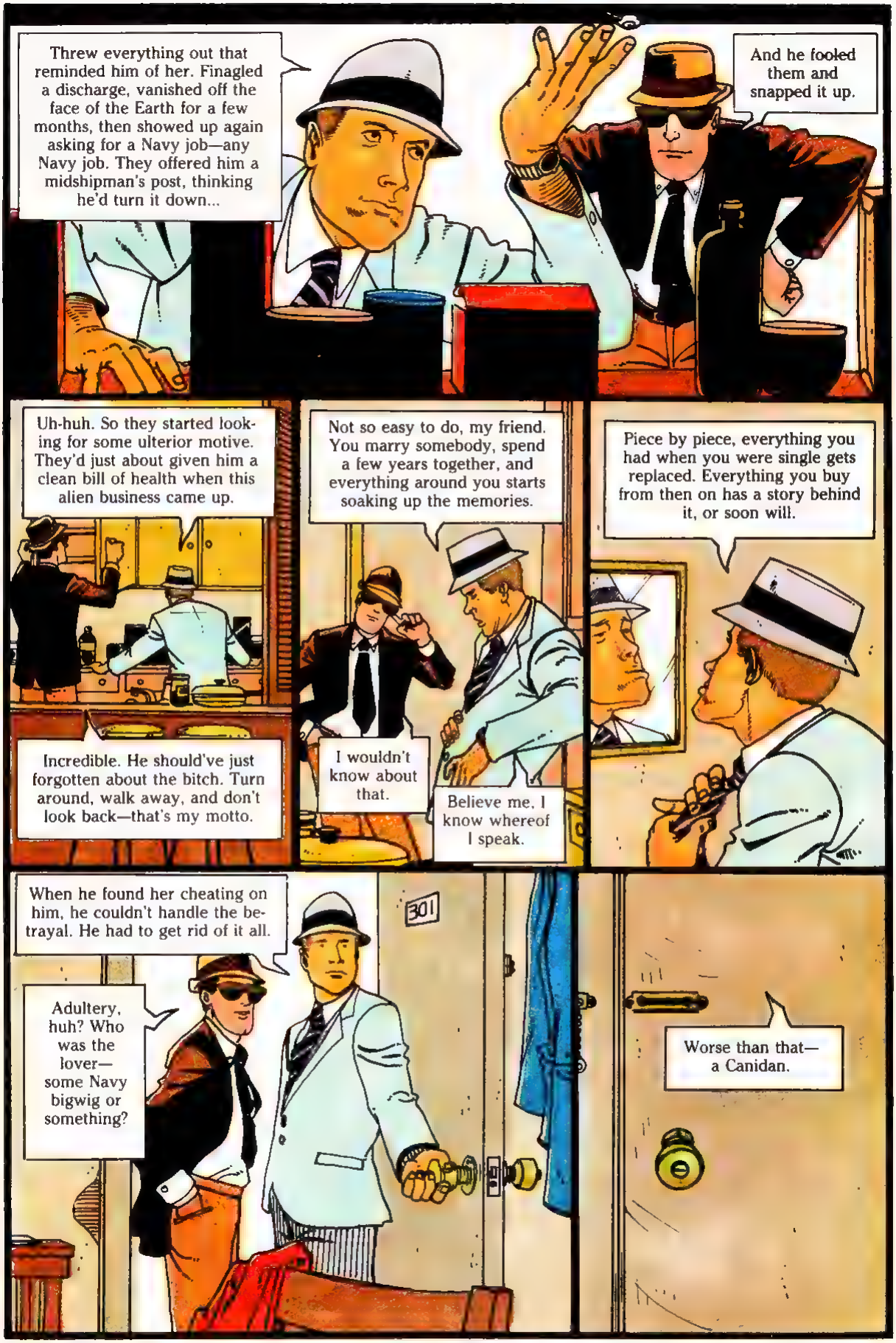
Well, there's nothing we can do anyway. Six months...we couldn't possibly build up a substantial force by then.
I know
What is it?
Sh
Engines. Aircraft, I think.

Meanwhile, in one of Honolulu's more provincial eateries...
Gaa—should I eat this stuff, or bury it?
BEER
I gotta whiz
FRENCH FRIED OKRA
BURGERS
Sorry, bud. It's occupied
MEN
Yeah? Says who? Wha'dya think this is, y'r own private toilet? Lemme in there... I gotta whiz.
FFFFT!
Hey...

Mort?
Damn druggies.
Hey, Frank.. you gonna be in there all day or what?
Hold your horses
Come on—hurry it up. We're attracting attention out here.
I'm coming. Jeez... can't even take a decent crapola in this business.
MARK ♡ JOHN
Yeah, well, I can't figure out why it takes you an hour every time. I spend half my day standing outside of bathroom doors protecting your privacy.
It ain't much more fun on this side, buddy, I can tell you
The wife says it's my job. She thinks I ought to quit, but I dunno. What would it help if I did? I'd just have to get another one
What?
Good Lord! Whyn't you light a match in there or something?
Don't make a scene. Just walk out, brisk but unobtrusive.
Secret Service

You got the number?
Here...
LIQUOR
BEER
1209
Posey Ravencraft, Green Street, 1099 ...apartment 301
Secret Service
MILK
Lovely
What're you doing?
301
Just checking
Secret Service
This is it


Some place.
Could be worse.
301
Damn little to work with. No pictures, no lamps.
He's got a TV, anyway.
What makes them think the alien's coming here?
Just one of the many places he might end up. Got to bug 'em all.
Never hurts to be thorough.
Hey...bingo.
Perfect.
Too bad about this Ravencraft guy, really. First he got busted from the space fleet, then he and his wife broke up...
I wondered what happened to all the furniture. Guess she took it, huh?
Nope. He threw it out.


Threw everything out that reminded him of her. Finagled a discharge, vanished off the face of the Earth for a few months, then showed up again asking for a Navy job—any Navy job. They offered him a midshipman's post, thinking he'd turn it down...
And he fooled them and snapped it up.
Uh-huh. So they started looking for some ulterior motive. They'd just about given him a clean bill of health when this alien business came up.
Incredible. He should've just forgotten about the bitch. Turn around, walk away, and don't look back—that's my motto.
Not so easy to do, my friend. You marry somebody, spend a few years together, and everything around you starts soaking up the memories.
I wouldn't know about that.
Believe me, I know whereof I speak.
Piece by piece, everything you had when you were single gets replaced. Everything you buy from then on has a story behind it, or soon will.
When he found her cheating on him, he couldn't handle the betrayal. He had to get rid of it all.
Adultery, huh? Who was the lover—some Navy bigwig or something?
301
Worse than that—a Canidan.

No! Absolutely not! The condition is unacceptable! I won't consider it any further!!
You agreed to supervision by a member of the World Security Council, and that means *me*! That was our oral agreement!
You agreed to rescue my *ship*! You knew it'd be touch-and-go!
You came down in the wrong ocean!
That's your problem! The *Navy* found me, didn't they?
That was dumb luck! It could have been anyone!
But it wasn't! It was the Navy, and I want a Navy aide!
Anyone but him!
Him...or the deal's off!
If I may interject a note of *reason* into this cacophony, I'd like to make a point.
Mr. Kneedam, the Nimp are within thirty-six years of the Earth. If we are to prepare a significant defense, we need Dalgoda's expertise True?
Regrettably, yes
Then, that being the case...
...and since the fate of the entire planet hinges on securing my client's cooperation, may I make a suggestion?
And what would that be?
Give him what he wants.

I've made the necessary corrections to the contract. All we need are your signatures.

Mr. Kneedam?

Oh... damn it!

I knew you were no good, Trione. I knew you would sell us down the tubes.

I'm just a simple lawyer, sir, plying my humble trade.

Dalgoda?

My pleasure.

Is this to be a permanent business relationship, Mr. Trione?
I'd consider it an honor.
Whatever you wish.
As would I. Let me get you my card.
I'd be most appreciative.
No trouble at all.
I think I'm going to vomit.
Mr. Kneedam? I hope I didn't leave you with the wrong impression. I'm truly very grateful for your help, and look forward to working with the Security Council.
Hmp
Now that the annoying details have been dealt with, shall we demonstrate our good faith in a more personal manner? What do you say?
Shake, Mr Kneedam?
To our mutual benefit, Dalgoda.
To the common good
Great! I knew you two would hit it off! How about a few drinks to celebrate?
Um...no thanks. If Dalgoda's staying in Honolulu for a while, I'll need to locate a decent hotel. Any suggestions?
No. Dal... care for a drink?
Just some cold water. But first, it's about my accommo-dations...
No problem—you'll stay at my place!
Your own home? How very hospitable! I accept gladly!
Ha! You'll probably change your mind once you see the place!

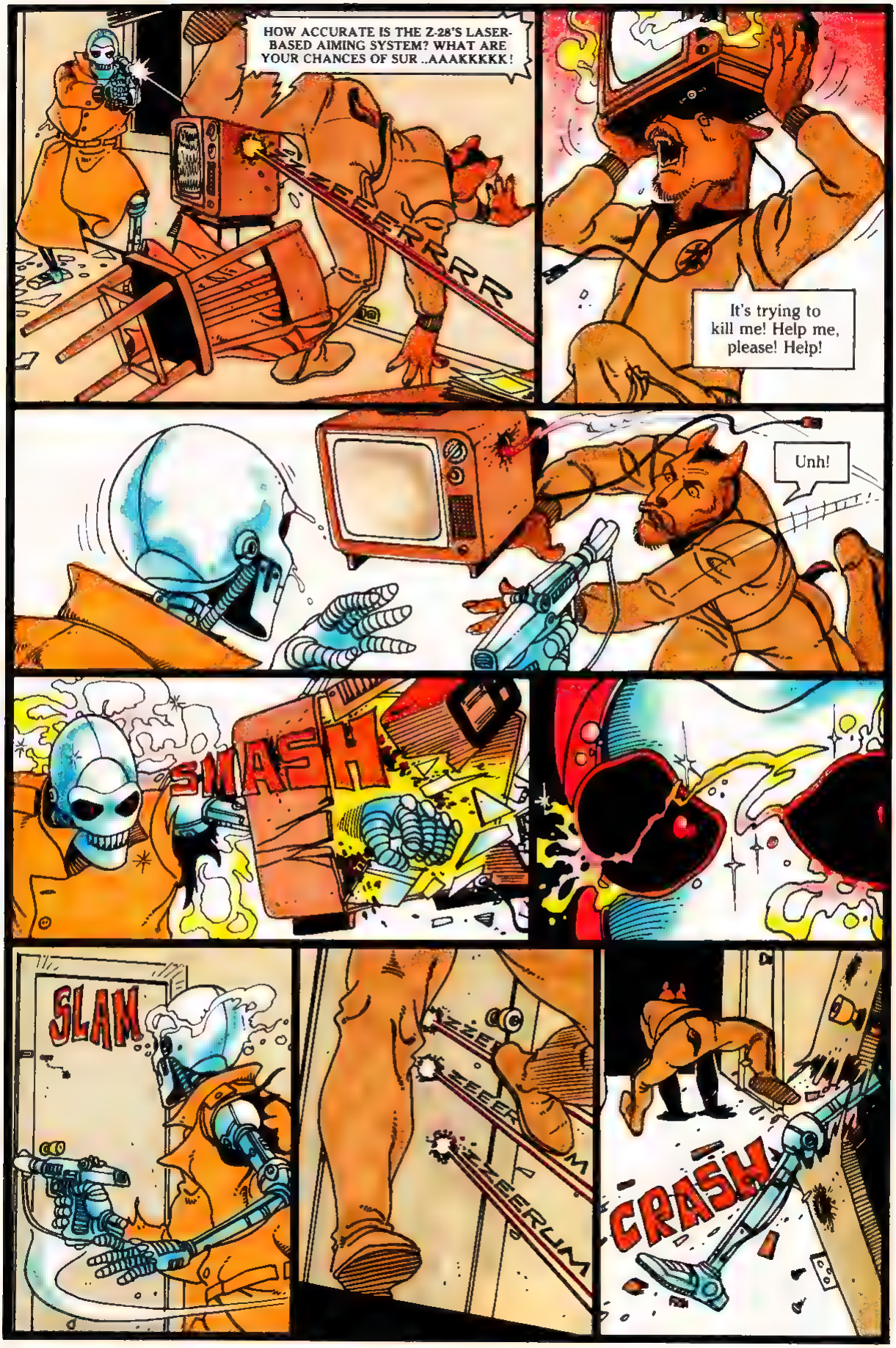
Sub-space travel—our scientists say it's impossible. And I thought our technologies were comparable!
They are...very much so. The clue was in certain mathematical information we received from the "bubbles" so long ago, only recently deciphered. They seemed to have no use for the concept.
Dekker's Diner
Unfortunately the discovery came too late. Our fleet was deployed more than half a light year away from the planet, and is now annihilated. Building new ships in only six months is impossible, so our only hope...
...lies in conversion of your existing destroyers into a sub-space armada.
Fat chance.
Most of our ships are in space handling the colonial uprisings, the mining disputes, guarding the trade routes, that sort of thing. The Navy has a few old ships planetside, but only because they're too old and battered to do anybody any good.
How about something to eat? My nap on the plane left me famished.
Not there...that place has a "Z" rating. I'll fix us something at home.
I don't know. It smells good to me.
You're sick.

Now, when we get inside, don't say anything important. Talk about my apartment, the weather—anything inconsequential. Got it?
Whatever you say, Posey.
Well, this is certainly a nice, uhm, ah ..
...a nice *climate* you have here.
Yeah, the best.
I suppose there are certain modes of behavior I should learn, certain *rituals* you perform...
Just keep your eyes open, watch people. You'll catch on soon enough
Yes, I'm sure I will.
Keep sharp. Stay alert. And most important—don't let anything get you down.
Good cheer in the face of adversity—there's merit in that, I guess. But how long can you keep it up?
As long as you have to, my friend.
Myself, I indulge in one really great fit of abject depression every month, no more, no less. I plan for it, do it, and then it's over, regular as clockwork.
Sounds like a good system.
No, it's a lousy system. Just the best one I've got.
CLiK

One more, and then we can talk freely
You can always tell when there's a new guy on the route...only new guys bug the television set. Just turn the volume down if you want to feed them any information.
You can learn a lot from watching television, Dal. I'd suggest you leave it on all the time you're here.
ORDER URBAN WAR MAGAZINE TODAY AND WITH YOUR PAID SUBSCRIPTION YOU'LL RECEIVE ABSOLUTELY FREE...
...HANDY GUIDE TO THE LATEST IN STREET WEAPONRY AND REMOTE ASSASSINATION APPARATUS! IS THERE A Z-28 KILL-DRONE IN YOUR FUTURE?
...while a few light years away, some *other* guy, every bit as ordinary, is trying to colonize an alien planet! And as for basic human competence, well...
These are odd times, Dal. You'll find them confusing. The last planetary war left us with gaping holes in our production— plenty of know-how but no money to implement the new technology.
MILK
OLIVE
The life of the everyday man is filled with anachronisms...like this refrigerator, and the cars on the street. The average Joe might as well be living in the 1960s...
...after the war, everybody was broke. The economy went flat. People bitched about their taxes, cuts had to be made.

They said it cost too much to educate everybody. "The price of education is too high!" they said. Ha! So now... we're paying the price of *ignorance*.
Phew! I should've thrown this out a week ago!
Sorry, Dal. We'll have to eat out after all. This stuff's rotten.
Oh...out again. He's a good sleeper, that boy.
Carryout, then. I'll bring you back a couple of burgers
STAR BULLETIN

SNIFF SNIFF
Hmm...what?
SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF
Ummm!
SNIIIFFF FRT
Now why would Posey leave a perfectly good meal sitting on the stove like that? I hope I didn't offend him somehow.
Posey?
KREAK KLANG
Gods!
ZZEEERRR
RUUMM
DON'T TAKE CHANCES WITH YOUR LIFE! URBAN WAR TELLS YOU HOW TO MAKE IT IN TODAY'S KILL-OR-BE-KILLED SOCIETY! HOW GOOD IS THE NEW Z-28 KILLER DRONE? IS IT REALLY THE ULTIMATE ASSASSIN?
URBAN WAR
CRASH


HOW ACCURATE IS THE Z-28'S LASER-BASED AIMING SYSTEM? WHAT ARE YOUR CHANCES OF SUR ..AAAKKKKK!
ZEEERRRR
It's trying to kill me! Help me, please! Help!
Unh!
SMASH
SLAM
ZZEERUM
ZEERUM
ZZEERUM
CRASH

F-T-T-KLIK
STAIRS
STAIRS
WHINE
ZZZEERSHOOM
GREEN ST.
RUN RUN RUN RUN RUN RUN
ZZEEE
ZEEE

Mister?
...kill-drone!
Hey! What about *these*? Hey!
Da!
Ugh!
Woof!
Posey! Help me! That *thing*...!

In there! Quick!
ZEERRR
ZEERRR
RESTROOMS
ZEERRR
ZEERRR
Good god! A Z-28!
ZGN
ZGN
ZGN
Dal... down that way! There might be a back way out!
ZEEERRR

CLANK CLANK CLANK

MEN

MEN

LORI GRUBER IS EASY!

FOR A GOOD TIM 536-159

FUK GRUBER

GANK GANK GANK

Go Rainbows

D.D

A.H.

SANI-KLEEN

I WUZ HEAH

TTTT-KLiKK

ZOWOUNCH
Okay, you can come out now. It's dead.
I tell you, I don't know anything about it! Look...just call this number...
VOTE
SCREECH
It's all right, officer—World Security Council Government business. We'll take care of these two.
If you say so
HPD

Kill-drones aren't cheap, Dal. Somebody wants you dead...really bad.
But *why*, Posey? After all...
...my mission is as important to the Earth as it is to *my* people! Don't they realize that?
They must. We can only assume that someone wants to sabotage the project anyway.
Who could possibly want such a thing? Killing me means handing your planet over to the Nimp! How could anyone hope to benefit from *that*?
Dal, there are over two hundred recognized terrorist groups active on the Earth today. Any of them might get the notion to let the Nimp do what they themselves can't—utterly destroy the governments of the world.
OLA
Crazy...and stupid. But how did they find out about any of this? And so soon!?
Maybe it isn't political at all. Lots of people saw you on the street. Maybe this is the work of one rich guy with a grudge against Canidans...who knows? At any rate, it's over for now. You can rest easy.
Yeah? For how long?
Oh, I don't know. Until morning, anyway...
PAU

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NO3

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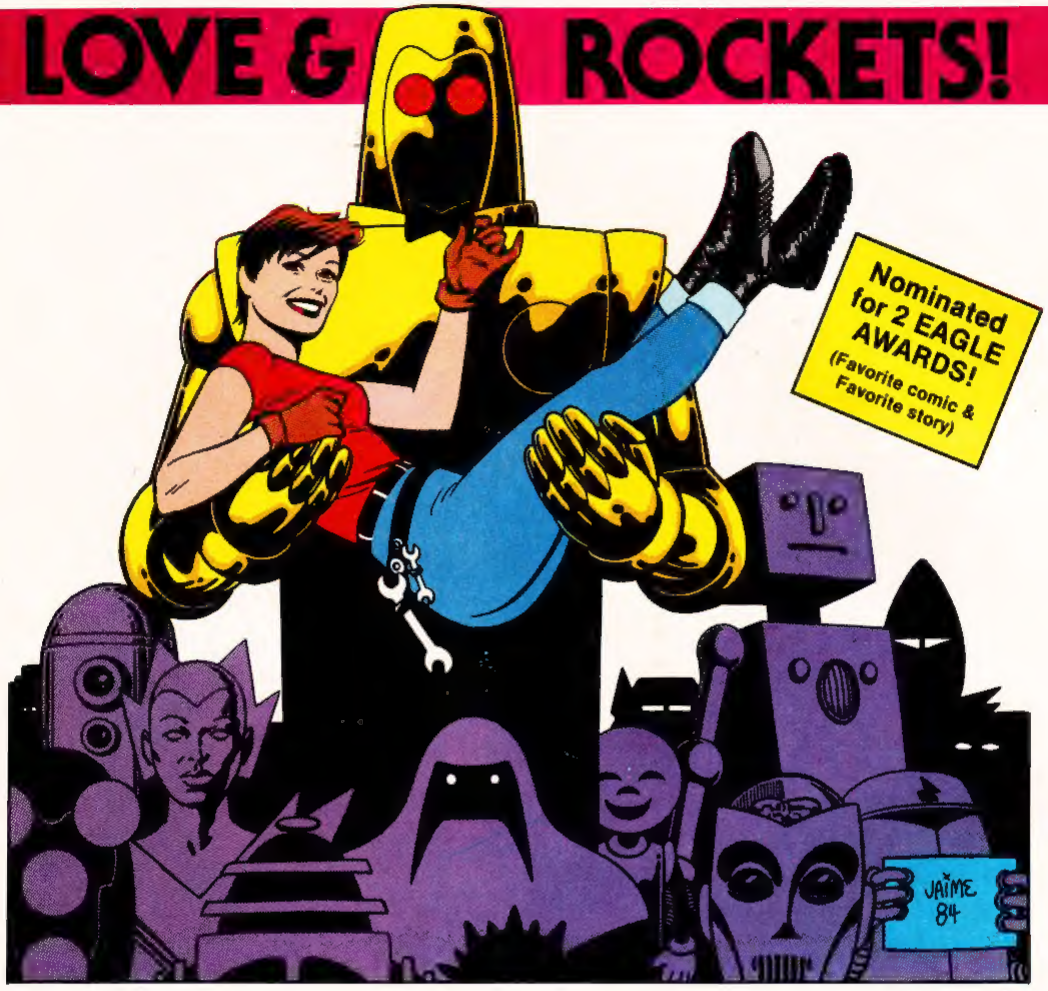

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MINI-BIOS

JAN STRNAD & FRIEND.

DENNIS FUJITAKE & FRIEND.

JAN STRNAD (pronounced Struh-NOD) grew up reading comics in Wichita, Kansas, a city he still reluctantly calls home. Initially drawn to Harvey and DC titles, he also liked Gold Key's *Magnus, Robot Fighter* and *Turok, Son of Stone*. He became a devoted Marvel fan with *Fantastic Four* #1.

Jan wrote and drew his own comics in junior high and went on to publish the fanzine *Anomaly* in high school and college. He appeared in fanzines such as *RBCC* with a regular column on fanzine publishing, "Eyeing the Egos," published prose fiction in a couple of fanzines, and even wrote a humor piece published in *Fantastic Fanzine*, edited by someone named Gary Groth. Jan met Richard Corben, Robert Kline, Herb Arnold, and John Adkins Richardson, with whom he collaborated in *Anomaly* or underground comix. He also had stories published in *Fever Dreams* with Corben and Richardson, published by Kitchen Sink, and *Fantagor* with Corben, published by Fantagor Press.

In 1973, Jan graduated from Wichita State University with a bachelor of arts degree in English literature and departmental honors in creative writing from his coursework and independent study with Jack Matthews and Richard Yates.

Jan is currently working on a 12-part maxi-series with Gil Kane (with whom he collaborated on the 1983 *Sword of the Atom* mini-series for DC and its sequel published in early 1984).

DENNIS FUJITAKE's illustrations and strips appeared in most of the prominent comics fanzines of the late '60s and early '70s, although *Dal* is his first sustained effort at a regular comics series. He was born and raised (and currently resides) in Honolulu, Hawaii, and takes excessive pleasure in sending Gary Groth long letters in the dead of winter extolling the virtues of Honolulu's weather.

Dennis's major influences from comics are Steve Ditko and the French comics artist Jean Giraud (Moebius); he also admires the work of Joe Kubert, Alex Toth, and Gil Kane. He's an avid science fiction reader, Keith Laumer and Harry Harrison being among his favorite science fiction writers.

In addition to his work on *Dal*, Dennis freelances art and works as a graphic artist at a Honolulu television station.

He likes dogs and publishers, seeing both species in a tie as man's best friend.

AFTERWORD by Gary Groth

Many of you may be familiar with Fantagraphics Books, the publisher of *Dalgoda*, but for the benefit of those of you who aren't, let me welcome you to our pages, introduce ourselves, and tell you a little bit about us. Fantagraphics Books is new to four-color comics publishing, but we aren't new to comics or comics publishing.

We have specialized in publishing black-and-white comics, "alternative" comics as we like to call them, that sell to a smaller, more specialized audience; *Dalgoda* is our first comic to be "mass-marketed" in the direct-sales comics shops across the country. Our black-and-white comics include *Love and Rockets, Don Rosa's Comics and Stories, Hugo, Gil Kane's Savage!*, and Jack Jackson's *Los Tejanos*; we've even published two gorgeous full-color albums, *The Survivors!*, written and drawn by the renowned Belgian cartoonist Hermann.

We also publish *NEMO: The Classic Comics Library*, a magazine devoted to the scholarly research and reprinting of old newspaper strips such as *Popeye, Polly and Her Pals, Gasoline Alley, Terry and the Pirates, Little Orphan Annie*, and many more. We are currently publishing *The Complete E.C. Segar Popeye*, a set of eight volumes (available in soft- and hard-cover) reprinting Segar's *Popeye* from 1929 to 1938. We will also soon be publishing similar collector's editions of Cliff Sterrett's *Polly and Her Pals* and Hal Foster's *Prince Valiant* (the latter in full color).

As publishers, you could say we're . . . eclectic.

I have edited *The Comics Journal*, a monthly magazine of news and criticism, for eight years. Some of you may not be aware of magazines such as the *Journal, Amazing Heroes, Comics Interview*, or *The Comic Reader*—independently published magazines that give professional creators, critics, and readers the opportunity to exchange views and discuss various aspects of comics. These magazines are available in many direct-sales comics shops along with the comics themselves, and if you haven't already done so, I urge you to add magazines like these to your reading list.

Those of you who have read my editorials in *The Comics Journal* may know me as a harsh critic of American comics. It's true that I think comics should be better than they are and that publishers and creators are obliged to imaginatively break from the cliches and stereotypes comics have created and continue to exploit. In a way, then, *Dalgoda* is a way of putting my money where my mouth is (and believe me, it's taken quite a lot of money to fill this mouth of mine). I hope you'll find that, as the editor of *Dal*, I've lived up to my word and delivered the goods. I think the difference between *Dal* and so many comics today, far from being radical in conception and execution, is subtle, and in its multifarious subtlety, it succeeds most decisively and most clearly. Jan and Dennis's scrupulous attention to small, human (or should I say canine?) details, their wit, their levity, and their craftsmanship, make Dal's adventure a joy to read. I hope you agree.

Finally, allow me to indulge in the obligatory—but no less sincere for that—first-issue expression of admiration for and pleasure of working with the creators, Jan Strnad, Dennis Fujitake, and colorist Ken Smith. This issue we've provided biographical sketches of Jan and Dennis; next issue you'll meet Ken Smith and "Grimwood's Daughter" artist Kevin Nowlan. Two months from now. In the meantime, enjoy this first issue.

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"Nothing is original. Steal from anywhere that resonates with inspiration or fuels your imagination. Devour old films, new films, music, books, paintings, photographs, poems, dreams, random conversations, architecture, bridges, street signs, trees, clouds, bodies of water, light and shadows. Select only things to steal from that speak directly to your soul. If you do this, your work (and theft) will be authentic. Authenticity is invaluable; originality is non-existent. And don't bother concealing your thievery–celebrate it if you feel like it. In any case, always remember what Jean-Luc Godard said: "It's not where you take things from–it's where you take them to."

— Jim Jarmusch

These words of wisdom brought to you by the letters L74KL and TwoByFour -DREGS-